

Appln No. 09/788,069

Amdt date January 15, 2004

Reply to Office action of July 15, 2003

**REMARKS/ARGUMENTS**

Applicants thank the Examiner for his attention to this application.

Applicants have amended the specification to make reference to certain commonly owned, copending applications that contain subject matter related to the subject matter in the present invention. Applicants' have previously submitted copies of the copending applications, as well as references cited in those applications, via IDS. Applicants request that the Examiner review the copending applications and cited references and reexamination, reconsider and allow the present application.

The Examiner has rejected claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. Section 101 as allegedly directed to non-statutory subject matter. Original claim 1, however, contains the steps of hashing relevant information, generating a digital signature and generating a bar code, none one of which are abstract steps that can be accomplished with pen and paper using the human mind. The useful result is the printing of a value bearing indicia. Furthermore, claim 1 as amended includes the step of communicating the digital signature from one of a plurality of stateless cryptomodules to one of a plurality of remotely located user computers, which also is not a mere abstract idea. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that this rejection be withdrawn.

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-37 under 35 U.S.C. Section 102(e) as being anticipated by Leon, U.S. Patent 6,424,954 ("Leon"). Applicants respectfully request that the rejection be withdrawn. Applicants' invention, as set forth in

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amended claim 1, includes the step of communicating the digital signature from one of a plurality of stateless cyrptomodules to one of a plurality of remotely located user computers. The remaining independent claims 12, 19, 30 and 35 contain similar limitations as set forth in the claims. In contrast, Leon discloses a localized hardware-based system located at the user's site. Leon's system teaches a dedicated postage metering system (SMD) connected to the user's computer as an external hardware device or circuit card that is portable. The SMD couples to the personal computer via a communications link 122 that can be a local serial link such as an RS-232 interface. By carefully partitioning the various features of the metering system, Leon teaches that the SMD can be manufactured in a relatively small size and low cost unit. See Leon, col. 2, lines 29-40, col. 3, line 61- col. 4, line 20, FIGs. 1A and IB. In Leon's system, each SMD performs state functions. See Leon, cols. 9, 10. Accordingly, in Leon's system, depending on the number of users, there may be thousands of individual localized SMDs attached to each user's PC. There is no disclosure in Leon of Applicants' system in which a stateless cryptomodule is used to interact with a plurality of remote users. As a limitation of the claims is missing from the relied upon reference, Applicant's respectfully submits that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) must be withdrawn.

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Based on the foregoing, Applicants request early issuance of a notice of allowance of claims 1-37 presently pending in this application.

Respectfully submitted,

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